Freedom a Firecracker

Dark Continent Sees Light in West Africa

By KEN MacTAGGART
(First of a series)

On the continent where mankind was cradled, his history is being shaped today.

Like its broad rivers, which flow placidly a thousand miles and then become turbulent races for the sea, Africa is climaxing its centuries of darkness in a race for the light which it calls freedom.

The course of that race will fashion history, will alter the economic structure of the world, and will affect our lives and our children's lives.

This is because the African Revolution is occurring at a time when the rest of the world is caught in a struggle between warring ideologies.

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Decisions made in Africa today and tomorrow can—and may—affect the economic strength (and, thereby influence) of nations like France and Britain.

The decisions are being made by a pitifully small handful of leaders most of whom recognize the significance of their actions. But they even more fully realize that the frenzy for freedom has seized their followers. The leaders fill a historic role akin to that of a Congo boatman who tries only to guide his craft once it hits the rapids.

And, most of all, those leaders realize that their greatest need is an intellectual supporting group among their followers. That group does not exist because of colonial policies of the past.

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This legacy is probably the most serious handicap where natives and sincere colonial administrators are trying to bring the people of an entire continent into the 20th century from the stone age, from medieval tribalism and from colonial domination.

As a result, appeals to the emotions, rather than the reason, of their followers are used by the leaders, even when most of those leaders are seeking to guide their people along peaceful paths of evolution.

The thin line between desire and passion can easily be overstepped; a paean of joy can become a yell of bloodlust by the misguided use of a wrong word.

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Africa is like an enormous chain of firecrackers, the igniting of one unit of which could fire the whole chain.

National boundaries created by European powers less than a century ago cut sharply across tribal groups and federations of tribes. What happens to a Balali in the Belgian Congo involves the emotions of a Balali across the river in the French Congo. Injury to a Hausa in Togoland can inflame a larger population of Hausa in Ghana.

West Africa which includes the Guinea Gulf states of Guinea, Ghana, the Ivory Coast, Nigeria and so on, has never been "settler" country. It has been long known as the white man's grave.

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Here traders reaped the products of the land, cocoa, palm oil, etc., and sold western wares. Independence evolved peacefully as in Ghana and Guinea. In 1960, Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, will become a free state.

All Africa has watched what occurred in West Africa.

Every other African sees no difference between himself and West Africans, no matter where he lives.

If they can have freedom, so should he.

If it isn't given, he is preparing to take it.

Bleak, wind-swept Tierra del Fuego, extreme southern tip of South America, where trees and all vegetation struggle to exist—this is the scene of today's story of The Blue Water, below.

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The Blue Water

They Didn't Find Joe

By JOHN FREDERIC GIBSON

If you come from the east, from Montreal or thereabouts, the chances are that sooner or later you will drive down to look at the Pacific—I mean the real ocean, out beyond San Juan Point and Cape Flattery.

What some people call the South Pacific, some the Southern Ocean, we used to call "the westerlies," a vast, desolate stretch of water between Australia and Tierra del Fuego. The bleak land around Cape Horn has been called the uttermost part of the earth, which it is, and the 1,000 sea miles westward of the Cape are worse.

You get an awful feeling down in those latitudes that if anything went wrong you would never be able to get back into the world.

When I remember the South Pacific, I always think of Joe Cooper. He was 17, but had already made two voyages on four-masted barques. Because we were both foreigners on a Finnish ship we became friends. Joe taught me a little of his vast knowledge of seamanship; even the proud and angular Finns respected him and silently acknowledged his ability.

It was not only that he could put a neat splice in a two-inch plough steel wire rope. It was not the fact that he could sew 40 feet of No. 1 canvas in a day or flick a chain stopper around a parted sheet before anyone else noticed the damage..

It was something more. He had a strange affinity with the ship, the wind and the sea. He moved like a cat, yet with a faint swagger. During a night gale he would vanish aloft and furl a royal by himself.

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He had that calm manner which helped us all to keep our nerve and tempers when we were tired and cold and pretty useless. He never made the mistake of trying to be cheerful and, thereby, making us look the forlorn creatures we knew ourselves to be.

Joe was a bit of a dandy. He was forever combing his fair hair and washing his pale blue shirts. He was tall for his age, and did not look toughened by the life he had been leading.

When ashore he would, in a quiet, unassuming way, steal the hearts of the girls. But his first love was the sea.

He loved the South Pacific as much as we hated it; he taught me to appreciate the grace and beauty of the great waves, a mile from crest to crest. We would sit on the main yard on the few days when the sun shone and watch the white barque sliding towards the east at 14 knots, tearing through the seas.

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On such days, Joe would sing in a rather high-pitched voice, and if the wind dropped at night, we could hear Joe singing from where he lolled against the jib sheets on lookout. We could be 1,000 miles from land or from the nearest ship, but Joe was always vigilant; he knew the danger from ice. I remember, too, how he would play his accordion in the tropics, swaying against the stars like a tranquilized Presley.

One morning, three days before we passed Cape Horn, Joe was running a new sheet on the foresail. It was mid-forenoon when he tied a rope around his waist and dropped over the side to pass the heavy wire through the sheave.

The wind was right aft, blowing hard, but it was not Cape Horn weather by any means. Eckstrom, the Swede who held the rope inboard, said afterwards that a wave came up, lapped the bulwarks and then the rope went slack.

Joe had gone.

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Some of us saw him in the water astern, and he seemed to be keeping himself high out of the cold sea as if to watch us sail away.

The mate blew four whistles. Man overboard!

Thirty seconds later, the barque swung up into the wind and we cast off the fore weather braces. Within four minutes, the starboard lifeboat was ready for lowering, but to me the whole thing looked terrifying and hopeless.

The mate sat, with supreme nonchalance, in the stern of the boat, watching the giant seas rolling up from the west. He raised one arm. For an instant the boat was 30 feet above a trough. Then it dropped, and the next wave came up and enfolded it in green water. I could hear Joe's voice: "Don't go overboard down here. You wouldn't have a chance."

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The lifeboat appeared from time to time. A white speck, a flash of oars and then it vanished into the shadows. We clewed up the mainsail and then gathered by the rail.

For 20 minutes we saw nothing. The captain sent a man aloft, but by that time we saw the boat away off on the port beam, heading back. Eckstrom was in the bow, kneeling there and looking down, not at the passing waves but right down into the green water.

They did not find Joe. We trimmed the yards and set the mainsail. When I went up to the wheel an hour later, the blue and white flag of Finland was half-way between the spanker gaff and the boom. Astern, an albatross flew over our wake.

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Before dark, it began to snow and the wind rose to gale force. The sea was black and white and breaking in great half-mile combers. The barque shuddered and staggered on through the night.

It was Easter Sunday, 1938.

The Car Corner

Porsche Best of Its Kind In the World, That's All

By J. T. JONES

We return today to one of my favorite subjects — a Porsche.

This one, the first Porsche I have ever timed over my own carefully-chosen rotten piece of road, knocked six seconds off the time recorded by an Ace Bristol, one of the hottest two-litre sports cars around.

This particular test, which I have mentioned before, is not a speed run in any sense. The road in question is viciously kinky and bumpy—and the main rule is that the car must never be pressed near its limit, must stay well on its own side of the road and in general play things safe.

The object is to measure, however crudely, the ease with which the car covers the ground under tough conditions. The Porsche is the best car I have ever put through this run. And I might add it carried the thing off with more grace and less fuss than any other of any kind.

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This Porsche was the 1600 Super convertible model, and it was outstanding in two other ways besides its road behavior.

First, it is the quietest convertible I've ever ridden in, and second, it has enormous urge without being horsey.

The familiar vacuum cleaner sound of a forced-air-cooled engine is hushed to a mere whisper, and the body is almost incredibly staunch for a convertible. Even on that grim road there were no squeaks or creaks or rattles or thumps or flapping noises.

The soft top can be removed completely and a hard top put in its place—in winter, for instance. The cloth top is about an inch and a half thick and so well padded that the supporting bows are nearly imperceptible.

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As for acceleration, I made no tests, but this is the first car in a long time that pushed my head back hard enough and long enough to tire my neck. The real push comes just as the tachometer passes the 3,500-rpm mark. The 1,600 Super engine delivers 88 European-type horsepower.

I might add that this car is practically impossible to hold down to 30 miles an hour—it calls for continual attention—and its speed is deceptive. Fifty miles an hour can feel like 30.

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The four-speed, all synchromesh gearbox is as usual a delight to the connoisseur and almost fumble-proof, although this sample was a little harsher in its action than previous Porsches I've driven. The clutch is firm without being fierce.

The car is very low, which helps its handling and road-holding but puts the rear window squarely level with the headlights of any bus that happens to be following.

But me, I can forgive a Porsche anything. It's the best of its kind in the world, that's all.

Crowds Ignore Stabbing Victim

LONDON (UPI)—A man lay bleeding to death in Piccadilly Circus in the heart of London for 30 minutes and not one of hundreds of passers-by stopped to help him, police reported yesterday.

Graham Osborne, 26, apparently was stabbed in a sidewalk scuffle and fell to the gutter. A policeman finally discovered him and rushed him to a hospital, but he died without regaining consciousness.

AFRICAN WOOL

Britain imported 52,000,000 pounds of South African wool in 1958, compared with 45,600,000 in 1957.

No Music 'Oscars' For Rock 'n' Roll

Off the Record
By Jim Taylor

Rock 'n' roll has been given the fast brush-off in nominations for the first annual "Oscar" awards of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.

Awards are to be made in 28 categories in the recording field, and the nominations in each category invariably go against the prevailing trend in the pop field.

While such artists as Perry Como, Frank Sinatra, Peggy Lee, Ella Fitzgerald and Andy Williams got the nod, hot-sellers from last year like Elvis Presley, Paul Anka, Bobby Darin, Connie Francis and Conway Twitty have been ignored.

Voting for the final awards, which will be made in April, is now in progress among NARAS members. Here are some of the choices they have:

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Nominees for best record of the year are Como's "Catch A Falling Star," "Witchcraft" by Sinatra, "Fever" by Peggy Lee, "Nel Blu" by Domenico Modungo and "Chipmunk Song" by David Seville. Como's, Modungo's and Sinatra's efforts are in the running for the song of the year along with "Gigi."

Album nominees include "Ella Fitzgerald Sings the Irving Berlin Song Book," Sinatra's "Come Fly With Me," "Peter Gunn" by Henry Mancini, "Only the Lonely," another Sinatra effort, and Tschaikowski's first piano concerto, by Van Cliburn.

Sinatra and Miss Fitzgerald led the individual awards. Miss Fitzgerald, undisputed queen of the blues singers for years, was among nominees for the top vocal performance of the year, and for the best jazz performance, "Ella Sings Duke Ellington." Others on the female vocalist list were Miss Lee, Doris Day, Eydie Gorme and Keely Smith.

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Sinatra, Como, Modungo and Williams complete the list for top male vocal performance.

Best vocal group is a toss-up at the moment among the Kingston Trio, Kirby Stone Four, King Sisters, and Louis Prima and Keely Smith.

"Tom Dooley," by the Kingston Trio, "All I Have To Do Is Dream," and "Bird Dog" by the Everly Brothers topped nominations in the country and western field.

This absence of rock 'n' roll music and singers adds up to one thing. The people in the music business produce the stuff because they know it sells. But when it comes to a choice, they prefer music.

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NEW RELEASES: **Doris Day** is making another addition to her long list of cinch hits with a catchy ballad called "Love Me in the Daytime" . . . Newest by the **Platters** is "Enchanted," with **Tony Williams** on lead vocal as usual . . . RCA Victor has another potential **Elvis** in **Jerry Simms**, a youngster with a ballad called "Dancing Partners." The flip is a slower rocking thing called "Dancing With a Memory."

OLD SURVEYOR

The village of Normandin, Que., was named after Joseph Normandin, who surveyed the Lake of St. John region in 1733.

Smoke Scare Hits Castle

WINDSOR, England (AP)—Smoke belched yesterday from a window of Windsor Castle, where the Queen is spending Easter.

Firemen sped to the scene but found no flames to put out. They reported a down draft from a chimney over an open fireplace sent smoke billowing out and started the scare.

B.C. Truck Crash Kills Alberta Man

DAWSON CREEK, B.C. (CP)—One of two men killed Friday in a truck accident on the Alaska Highway has been identified as Theodore Paul Pashuk, 21, of Glendon, Alta.

Their tank truck jack-knifed after plunging into a ditch. Police say they believe the steering gear on the vehicle failed.

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